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## **JURY CONVICTS FORMER FRESNO COUNTY SHERIFF'S EMPLOYEE ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES**

WASHINGTON – On Feb. 29, 2008, a federal jury in Fresno, Calif., convicted Ronald B. Vaughn Jr., 42, of Fresno, Calif., on two counts of possessing and attempting to possess child pornography, as well as one count of receiving and attempting to receive child pornography, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of California McGregor W. Scott announced today.

The evidence and testimony presented at trial established that from 2000 to 2001, Vaughn investigated child exploitation offenses as a detective in the Sex Crimes Unit of the Fresno County Sheriff's Department. He later became a sergeant, but left in the summer of 2004 to operate "Ron Vaughn Jr. Photography," a private photography business that specialized in photographing weddings, students and area sports teams.

The jury heard that while Vaughn worked in the Sex Crimes Unit in 2000, he gained access to approximately 275 still and video images of child pornography, 100 of which were discovered on an illegal CD found in Vaughn's photography studio in November 2005. The CD was not created until October 2002, however, after Vaughn had left the Sex Crimes Unit. Forensic analysis of three computers Vaughn owned but used in different locations showed that the CD found in his photography studio had been viewed or copied on each of the computers. Also discovered on Vaughn's three computers was evidence that a user had downloaded files with titles indicative of child pornography, using a peer-to-peer file-sharing program not involved in any case Vaughn had investigated for the Sheriff's Department. Peer-to-peer software programs permit computer users connected to the Internet to link computers around the world, for the purpose of sharing files. Such programs can also be used to search for and download child pornography.

Senior U.S. District Judge Oliver W. Wanger presided over Vaughn's trial and ordered him taken into custody following the verdicts. Vaughn's sentencing hearing has been set for May 19, 2008. At sentencing, he faces a mandatory minimum prison sentence of five years and a potential maximum sentence of 40 years, a \$750,000 fine, and the possibility of lifetime supervised release. Ultimately, Vaughn's sentence will be determined by the court after considering a number of factors, including the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David L. Gappa of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Fresno, Calif., and Trial Attorney Jill Trumbull-Harris of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) in the Criminal Division. The investigation was conducted jointly by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Fresno, Calif. Computer forensic analysis and expert trial testimony was provided by the CEOS's High Tech Investigative Unit.

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